

**WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:**

1. A method of managing a network comprising:  
transmitting a signal from a network manager to each of plural nodes to  
determine the availability of each node;  
5 determining a response time of each node using the signal; and  
relaying the response time of each node to a database of the network  
manager.
2. The method of claim 1, further comprising:  
receiving the response time of each node in a standard format; and  
10 reformatting the response time of each node into a flat file format prior to  
relaying the response time of each node to the database.
3. The method of claim 2, wherein the flat file format comprises:  
a start time of the response time and a sampling interval;  
an end time of the sampling interval;  
15 the response time in milliseconds; and  
a node identification number
4. The method of claim 3, wherein the node identification number is an IP  
address.
- 20 5. The method of claim 1, wherein the signal is an Internet Control Message  
Protocol (ICMP) echo request and an ICMP echo reply.
6. The method of claim 1, wherein the plural nodes comprise substantially all  
nodes of the network.

7. The method of claim 1, further comprising:  
designating at least one of the plural nodes as one of a high priority node  
and a low priority node; and  
transmitting the signal to each high priority node more frequently than the  
5 signal is transmitted to each low priority node.
8. The method of claim 1, wherein the network manager is a Network Node  
Manager.
9. A computer-based system for managing a network comprising:  
logic that transmits a signal from a network manager to each of plural nodes  
10 to determine the availability of each node;  
logic that determines a response time of each node using the signal; and  
logic that relays the response time of each node to a database of the network  
manager.
10. The computer-based system of claim 9, further comprising:  
15 logic that receives the response time of each node in a standard format; and  
logic that reformats the response time of each node into a flat file format  
prior to relaying the response time of each node to the database.
11. The computer-based system of claim 10, wherein the flat file format  
comprises:  
20 a start time of the response time and a sampling interval;  
an end time of the sampling interval;  
the response time in milliseconds; and  
a node identification number

12. The computer-based system of claim 11, wherein the node identification number is an IP address.

13. The computer-based system of claim 9, wherein the signal is an Internet Control Message Protocol (ICMP) echo request and an ICMP echo reply.

5 14. The computer-based system of claim 9, wherein the plural nodes comprise substantially all nodes of the network.

15. The computer-based system of claim 9, further comprising:  
logic that designates at least one of the plural nodes as one of a high priority node and a low priority node; and

10 logic that transmits the signal to each high priority node more frequently than the signal is transmitted to each low priority node.

16. The computer-based system of claim 9, wherein the network manager is a Network Node Manager.